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LOOK, I TRY TO SHAVE MY LEGS, BUT C'MON. WEREWOLF.

LIFE'S NOT EASY FOR A FURRY FEMALE IN SPACE'S NEW SHOW BITTEN PAGE 15

Toronto FC hush on huge acquisitions

Team to add $100 million worth of talent with striker Jermain Defoe, midfielder Michael Bradley PAGE 26

Bird flu death prompts wave of assurances

Nothing to fear, officials say after Canada sees first bird flu death in North America PAGES 8 & 9

Lives on hold over backlog at Pearson

Funeral, classes missed as travellers wait for things to get back to normal after airport flight freeze PAGE 6

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Triple shooting was targeted: Cops

Richmond Hill.
Local resident describes suspicious and violent happenings in the area

A barrage of more than a dozen gunshots shocked a co-op housing community in Richmond Hill on Wednesday in an apparently targeted triple shooting.

Residents on the Centre Street crescent near Yonge and Major MacKenzie Drive awoke to sirens, police dogs and yellow crime-scene tape after a man and a woman were shot dead and another man was critically injured.

The trio was found inside a car sitting in a parking lot. Several people who live nearby said they heard a quick succession of shots around midnight.

A resident who identified herself as Vivian D. said she and her daughter heard 15 to 20 shots around midnight.

"I was scared. I thought it was either fireworks or gunshots," she said. "And sure enough, soon after I heard the sirens."

According to York Regional Police, the names of the victims will likely be released on Thursday.

The woman was declared dead and the two men were rushed to hospital, said Const. Andy Pattenden. One died after arrival and the other was still in critical condition.

Based on witness information, Pattenden said investigators are looking for two male suspects believed to have fled on foot from the Centre Green complex.

"It does not appear to be a random act," he said.

A police forensic team was at the scene, a mostly industrial block filled by auto shops, Wednesday morning. Yellow police tape sealed off the west parking lot as investigators collected evidence.

After 10 a.m., police loaded a white car onto a tractor-trailer to be towed away.

Management for the Centre Green co-op said they have "no information" about whether the victims were residents of the complex.

Another resident, who asked not to be named, said she has lived at the co-op for nearly six years and never lets her two children play outside.

"Normally it's quiet, but over the last two weeks I've seen quite a bit of strange cars driving around very slowly with lights off," the woman said. "It's something very unsettling."

Over the Christmas break, she was out on her porch for a cigarette late one night. She watched a car pull into the parking lot and flash its high beams before two men came out to look at the car.

"They were just checking out the car," she said. "Which seemed very strange at three in the morning."

She said building management has told her the area is police patrolled due to "incidents" in the area.

Around this time last year, someone was stabbed in the neighbourhood, she said.

Shortly after moving in, she called the police when an unknown person rang her doorbell holding a gun.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

York Regional Police gather evidence at the scene of a triple shooting that left two people dead and one wounded in a Richmond Hill housing co-op parking lot Wednesday. JACQUES GALLANT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'Toronto-type crime'

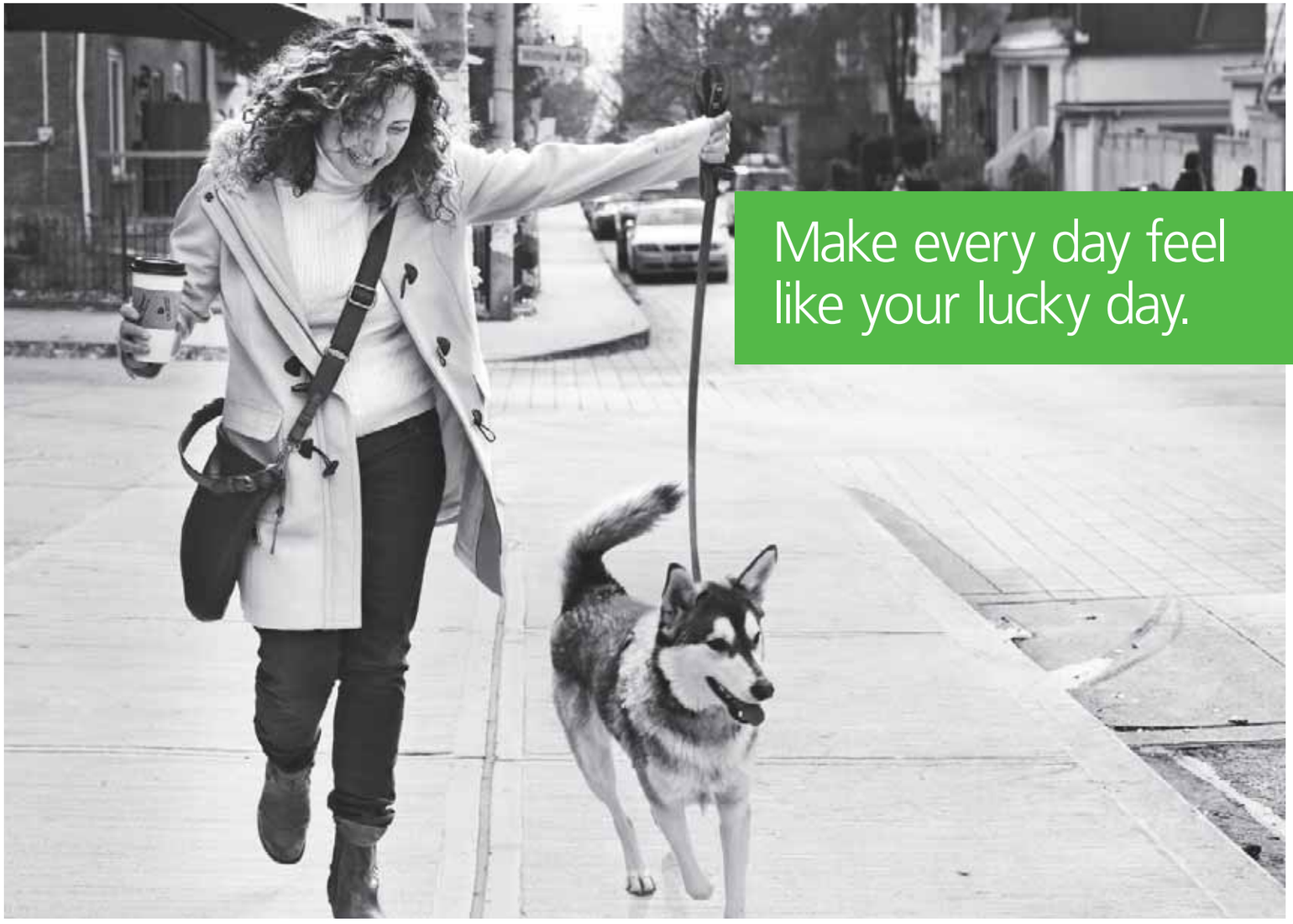
Richmond Hill Coun. Carmine Perrelli said he is holding a community meeting on Jan. 22 so residents can be briefed on the shooting and share information.

- "Richmond Hill is one of the safest places in the country," he said. "And when we have Toronto-type crime in little Richmond Hill, it's a concern."
- According to crime statistics recorded by York police, there have been few reported incidents in the immediate vicinity of the shooting since this summer.

Witness

"I was scared. I thought it was either fireworks or gunshots.... And sure enough, soon after I heard the sirens."

Resident Vivian D.



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Rob Ford scandal

Project Traveller docs due Feb. 19

The delay in publicly releasing dozens more police documents connected to a major guns and gangs operation that has been linked to Mayor Rob Ford will now stretch well into next month. A ruling Wednesday gives the Crown until Feb. 19 to hand over the documents. Those copies will be available solely to media lawyers at first, so they can prepare arguments for what parts should be uncensored and released. There is no timeline set on when they might be available to the public. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Disaster relief wanted

Ice storm cost skyrockets

Toronto's city manager is recommending city council ask the provincial and federal governments for financial assistance to help pay for damage caused by two storms in 2013. A report to Toronto council on Wednesday says last month's ice storm and flooding in July 2013 will cost the city in excess of $171 million. It suggests council request that the municipal affairs minister declare Toronto a "disaster area" in an effort to get relief due to the estimated $106 million in costs from last month's ice storm. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tree split during the ice storm. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Two females sought in couple's murder in Florida

Donny Pichosky and Rochelle Wise on their wedding day in Toronto in 2009. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Two mystery women are now at the centre of the investigation into the double murder of a pair of well-loved Toronto snowbirds, killed in their Florida home one year ago.

Hallandale Beach Police Chief Dwayne Flournoy revealed Wednesday that police have DNA profiles of "two females" suspected in the deaths of David "Donny" Pichosky, 71, and Rochelle Wise, 66.

Flanked by the couple's family and friends, Flournoy told a press conference the profile is "very unique."

Investigators have not yet been able to match the DNA, collected from the crime scene, with databases of law-enforcement agencies elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada. The DNA does not match any family members, or anyone who would have been allowed to enter the home, such as a maids or maintenance workers, Flournoy said.

Police also distributed a sketch of a woman captured on surveillance video walking behind the couple's home on the morning of Jan. 9, the day before their bodies were found. First released in February, the video shows a heavy-set blond woman carrying an unidentified object in her hands.

Flournoy said she was near the couple's home "in and around the time we believe they were compromised."

"We believe the identification of this female is critical and important to this case," he said, adding that the couple had no known enemies.

"We have not been able to pinpoint why" they were killed, he said.

The crime has baffled investigators and devastated the couple's large network of family and friends, who renewed their pleas on Wednesday for those with information to come forward.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Councillor objects to Central Tech field dome

At issue. Vibrant football program or neighbourhood green space

A Toronto councillor is opposing a $6-million restoration of Central Tech's contaminated 1960s-era playing field, including the installation of a seasonal dome that would allow students to use the outside space year-round.

The temporary dome would cover the massive field, which fronts the school along Bathurst St. north of Harbord St., each year from November until April.

Coun. Adam Vaughan says he fears the proposed dome will block views of the heritage school and wreck the character of the street.

"There's an aesthetic issue. Central Tech and Bathurst St. were part of a (city) study," says Vaughan. "And putting up a huge 16-metre bubble, even if it's there for five or six months of the year, it creates issues."

Vaughan, councillor for Ward 20, said he also objects to privatizing a public asset.

"That green field, in a neighbourhood like Harbord Village where there are no parks, where you learn to ride a bike and where you kick a ball with your kids, it's non-programmed recreational space for families in the neighbourhood."

Officials with the TDSB, who brokered the deal to build the dome with Toronto-based Razor Management and at no cost to the board, are baffled.

"The dome is temporary. It's a seasonal dome," says board spokesperson Sherri Schwartz Maltz. "Central Tech is an inner-city school with a vibrant football program. These kids need football; want football," she says.

Central Tech principal Sheryl Freeman is seen on the west side of the school, where a proposal to put a dome over the sports playing field will be the subject of a community meeting Thursday in Central Tech's auditorium at 7 p.m. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Principal Sheryl Freeman says the dome would allow Central Tech to expand its popular sports programs.

The board closed the field in November after the testing revealed cinder and ash levels above provincial standards.

Carla Kisko, assistant director of finance and operations for the TDSB, says the field is not unsafe, but the board will have to address the contamination issue now that the soil has been disturbed.

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The Toronto Zoo says its polar-bear cub, seen in this screen grab from video released by the zoo, is now "quite active" and has begun biting objects like his blanket as his teeth come in. METRO

Polar-bear cub learning to walk on wobbly legs

Toronto Zoo. Senior veterinarian says staff are 'very happy with his progress so far'

The Toronto Zoo's polar-bear cub is just beginning to take its first steps on all four legs.

The cub, born in early November and weighing in at 4.4 kg, is also teething on objects such as his blanket as his molars and incisors grow in, drinking milk six times a day and learning to lap milk from a dish. He is also playing.

Quoted

"We hope that he will grow up to become another ambassador for his species, highlighting threats to the arctic environment."

Dr. Graham Crawshaw, senior veterinarian, Toronto Zoo

He can now open his eyes fully and focus on his surroundings, and he has been out of the incubator for a month now, becoming acclimatized to cooler temperatures. His whiskers are just growing in and he's developing a thicker coat.

The cub, born to mother Aurora, was the only survivor in the litter of three, but has a brother, Hudson, living in Winnipeg. Because of Aurora's history of rejecting and attacking her litter of three, the wildlife centre has taken up the responsibility of caring for the cub.

Polar-bear cubs often don't survive the first three months after birth, but the wildlife team, which has been "working around the clock" to care for him, says he is responding well.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ford, Kelly clash over property-tax increase

The city budget committee voted Wednesday in favour of a motion to reduce the proposed property-tax hike by about a quarter per cent, even though city staff were recommending a two per cent property-tax hike as part of the 2014 operating budget.

When a 0.5 per cent levy to fund the Bloor-Danforth subway line extension is added, the total property tax hike in 2014 will be 2.25 per cent, if council as a whole votes in favour of the proposed budget at the end of the month.

During the often raucous meeting, Toronto's mayor and deputy mayor were at odds over the amount of the 2014 property-tax increase.

Mayor Rob Ford wants taxes to go up 1.75 per cent and Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly is pushing for 2.25 per cent. Both figures include 0.5 per cent to help pay for the Scarborough subway.

Quoted

"If we contract some stuff out, you may see that as a service cut. I don't see that as a service cut." Mayor Rob Ford

If Ford prevails, municipal taxes on a typical home assessed at $498,000 would come to $2,569.50. If Kelly's position wins, the bill would be $2,582.50, or $13 more.

Tension over finalizing the proposed $9.6-billion operating budget is heightened this year because council stripped Ford of many of his mayoral powers and transferred them to Kelly in the wake of the mayor's crack-video scandal.

The budget committee sided with Kelly, backing a 2.25 per cent increase and rejecting Ford's call to cut the land-transfer tax charged on real-estate sales, which yielded $356 million in 2013.

After appearing at budget committee meeting Wednesday, Ford told reporters that he will submit ideas to save $50 million when council meets Jan. 29 and 30 to approve the budget.

Ford said money could be saved in "many areas," citing as examples contracting out more garbage pickup to the private sector and also hiring companies to plant trees.

"I see that as better services, if the private sector is delivering them instead of the government delivering them," he said.

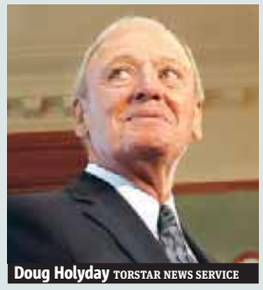
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE/METRO

Provincial politics

Doug Ford would have to behave himself as an MPP, says Holyday

Coun. Doug Ford will have to learn to "play by the rules" if he jumps to provincial politics from city hall, advises one of his staunchest allies.

Progressive Conservative MPP Doug Holyday (Etobicoke Lakeshore) said Wednesday he hoped Mayor Rob Ford's brother runs for the party in Etobicoke North in an election expected as early as spring.



Doug Holyday TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"He could be a good MPP. He's got a good head on his shoulders. He does know how to save a dollar and how to operate efficiently. Certainly that's needed in this place," said Holyday, the former deputy mayor, who was elected in a provincial byelection last summer.

"If he does come here, I'll certainly be speaking with him on how I think things work here (and) what I think he needs to do to help us.

"As a matter of fact, if he ever wants to seek the nomination I'll try to explain that to him before he gets into that arena. Because there's no sense in anybody coming here and thinking that they're not going to play by the rules.

"It's entirely different than it was at city hall. If he really wants to come here he's going to have to play by the rules."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Hundreds of flights remain cancelled at Pearson airport

Left in limbo. By Wednesday afternoon, almost a third of the scheduled flights arriving were cancelled — 243 total

Thousands of travellers remained stranded at Pearson International Airport Wednesday as airlines continued to postpone and cancel flights while grappling with a huge backlog of passengers.

Dorothy Gittens missed her brother's funeral Wednesday morning. The 79-year-old flew in from London, England, on Monday, but her connecting flight to Montreal didn't materialize.

"Pay all this money to come here for the funeral and I'm stuck in a bloomin' airport," said Gittens, sitting with her baggage in Pearson's Terminal 1. "I know the funeral must be over by now," she said as she was helped into a wheelchair to finally be taken to a departure gate.

The backlog of passengers comes after temperatures of –25C prompted the Greater Toronto Airports Authority to stop all North American arrivals from touching down on the Pearson runway early Tuesday morning.

"When you have a ground stop because conditions have become so untenable, you've got a situation where you're trying to pour water into a glass that is already full," said WestJet spokesman Robert Palmer.

Palmer said 22,000 WestJet passengers were affected by the cancellations, and it would take at least several more days to get things back on schedule.

Quoted

"We did put in a lot of cancellations for today and the idea behind that is we put out a schedule for our customers that we knew we could deliver. We didn't want to over-promise."

Peter Fitzpatrick, Air Canada spokesman

By Wednesday afternoon, almost a third of scheduled flights arriving at Pearson were cancelled, 243 in total. One quarter of departures — 188 scheduled flights — were also cancelled.

Frustrated travellers were left in limbo, many resorting to sleeping on seats or the floor of the terminal.

Rajesh Sehgal, 47, said he stood in line for nine hours Tuesday to rebook his flight to India, only to have it cancelled again Wednesday. He said he'll be at least three days late getting home.

"It's very frustrating with a family," said Sehgal, who is travelling with his wife and two young children.

Nikki Stein, 19, has spent the last two days either on a plane or in an airport in a grueling journey from Sydney, Australia to Thunder Bay, Ont.

"We got delayed in Sydney for five hours. Delayed in Vancouver for seven hours," she said. "Then we got here at 4:30 this morning, and we've been here ever since because there are no hotels."

Stein said Air Canada told her all the hotels were fully booked, and the closest one was an hour away. She said the delays have forced her to miss her first days of classes at Lakehead University, where she's studying chemical engineering.

Sara Newitt, 44, is trying to get to Deer Lake, N.L. She has been waiting since Tuesday night, and said she was fortunate to be put up in a hotel by Air Canada — unlike 79-year-old Gittens, who spent the night at the airport.

"They put me up in a hotel and I'm an able-bodied person, and they have a lady like that stay in the airport," Newitt said. "It doesn't make sense. I think they should be reimbursing her for her entire trip."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ezequiel Vega Morales arrived at Pearson airport expecting to take an early morning flight to Quebec City, which was cancelled. Would-be travellers at Pearson continue to face delays and cancellations in the wake of the frigid weather which has disrupted the travel plans of tens of thousands of travellers. KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

JPEC brings jazz shows to Paintbox

Randy Weston CONTRIBUTED

The Jazz Performance and Education Centre is kicking off a series of six Saturday night jazz performances with "African Rhythms" Randy Weston on Jan. 11, at Toronto's new Paintbox Bistro on Dundas Street East.

Weston, a veteran American jazz pianist and composer of Jamaican heritage, is best known for his The Spirits of Our Ancestors recording, which featured guest artists such as Dizzy Gillespie.

Weston has garnered many international awards over his career, including: The French Order of Arts and Letters and the National Endowment for the Arts award as an NEA Jazz Master, the highest US award in jazz.

The Saturday jazz series features international and Canadian jazz artists, including the Kelly Jefferson & Kelsley Grant Sextet on Jan. 18, and David Braid with Matt Brubeck on Feb. 8. **METRO**

@tweetacoffee

Starbucks and Twitter launch instant eGifting

Starbucks has adopted a new way of using Twitter to send coupons, turning the social media platform into a gifting platform.

Customers in Canada can sign up to link their Starbucks account and Twitter accounts using a credit card. Then they can gift others on Twitter simply by typing @tweetacoffee, followed by the person's Twitter address. The person receiving the gift gets a link to a coupon which can be printed or downloaded onto their mobile phone using the Starbucks app.

The feature launches in Canada at 8 a.m. on Thursday. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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U.K. survey shows many men have fallen asleep at the wheel

Driving tired carries similar risks to driving drunk, but, according to a new British survey, sleeping at the wheel is common, with men being by far the worst offenders.

In the survey of 1,000 drivers, British road safety charity Brake found that 45 per cent of men admitted "microsleeps" of up to 30 seconds while driving. The figure for women was 22 per cent. A further 14 per cent of male drivers have slept for longer periods behind the wheel, while just two per cent of women had done the same.

An estimated one-in-six fatal road crashes result from tiredness. These typically involve vehicles veering off the road or a driver failing to brake.

"Men are much more likely to take risks at the wheel, such as setting off on journeys without enough sleep, or trying to push through if they feel drowsy," Ellen Booth, senior campaigns officer at Brake, told Metro. "We see this trend across the board when it comes to road safety."

Booth believes "cultural and biological" factors explain why men take more risks. More than 90 per cent of those convicted for dangerous driving in Britain are male, while a recent U.S. study found that men caused 80 per cent of crashes. Researchers are concerned that tiredness is adding to the trend. **KIERON MONKS/ METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON**

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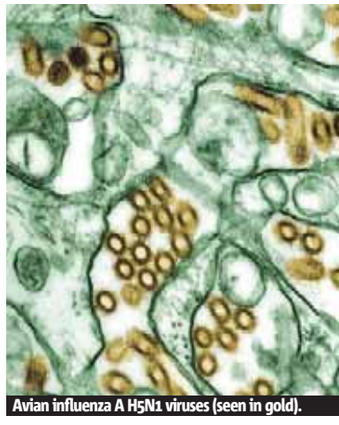
PM defends rail-safety record in

Derailed train cars burn in Plaster Rock, N.B., Wednesday. A CN freight train carrying northwestern New Brunswick, leading to the evacuation of 150 people. It's at least the Lac-Mégantic, Que., that claimed 47 lives. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, speaking to saying the government has "vastly" increased rail safety and rail inspections.

Fatal bird located in

First in North America. Health officials assure public that incident was isolated, unrelated to seasonal flu and risk to public is small



Avian influenza A H5N1 viruses (seen in gold).

Federal public health officials say a fatal human case of H5N1 bird flu has been reported in Canada, the first such case in North America.

Health Minister Rona Ambrose says the case, which was located in Alberta, was an isolated one and that the risk to the general public is small.

"The risk of getting H5N1 is very low," Ambrose told a hastily assembled news conference in Ottawa via conference call.

"This case is not part of the seasonal flu, which circulates in Canada every year."

The H5N1 strain is unrelated to the seasonal flu outbreak, Ambrose added.

Health officials say the victim had travelled to China last month and was hospitalized after returning to Alberta on Jan. 1, then died two days later.

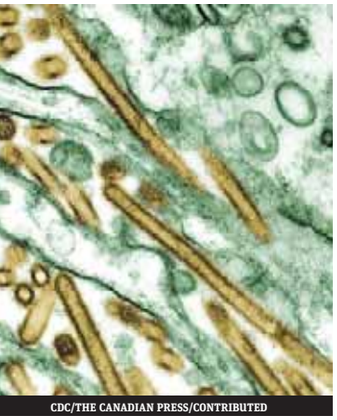
They say that while it

wake of N.B. derailment

crude oil and propane derailed Tuesday night in a sparsely populated region of third such serious incident on North American rails since last July's deadly derailment in reporters in Inuvik, N.W.T., Wednesday, defended his government's record on rail safety,

TOM BATEMAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

flu case Alberta



CDC/THE CANADIAN PRESS/CONTRIBUTED

remains unclear how the person contracted the virus, there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

"The health system did everything it could for this individual, and our thoughts are with the family at this time," Ambrose said.

Dr. James Talbot, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, said that family members of the victim are being monitored and treated with medication, noting that there's nothing to indicate they are sick.

"Public health has followed up with all close contacts of this individual and offered Tamiflu as a precaution," Talbot said.

"None of them have symptoms and the risk of developing symptoms is extremely low. Precautions for health-care staff were also taken as part of this individual's hospital treatment."

The World Health Organization says that as of mid-December, there had been 648 laboratory-confirmed human cases of H5N1 flu since 2003, reported from 15 countries. Of that total, 384 infections have been fatal.

In 2013, there were 38 worldwide cases of H5N1, 24 of which were fatal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Political intimidation'?

Sri Lanka claims MP is trying to embarrass them

Sri Lanka's official representatives in Canada are accusing an MP of attempting to embarrass the country's government by claiming she faced political intimidation during a visit there.

Earlier this month, Rathika Sitsabaiesan said she was warned by Sri Lankan officials during her private visit that she could be arrested and deported.

The Sri Lanka High Commission said Wednesday that Sitsabaiesan was advised not to engage in activities that would amount to flouting Sri Lanka's laws, and Sitsabaiesan's claim she was subject to "political intimidation" is an attempt to embarrass the government.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Changes implemented

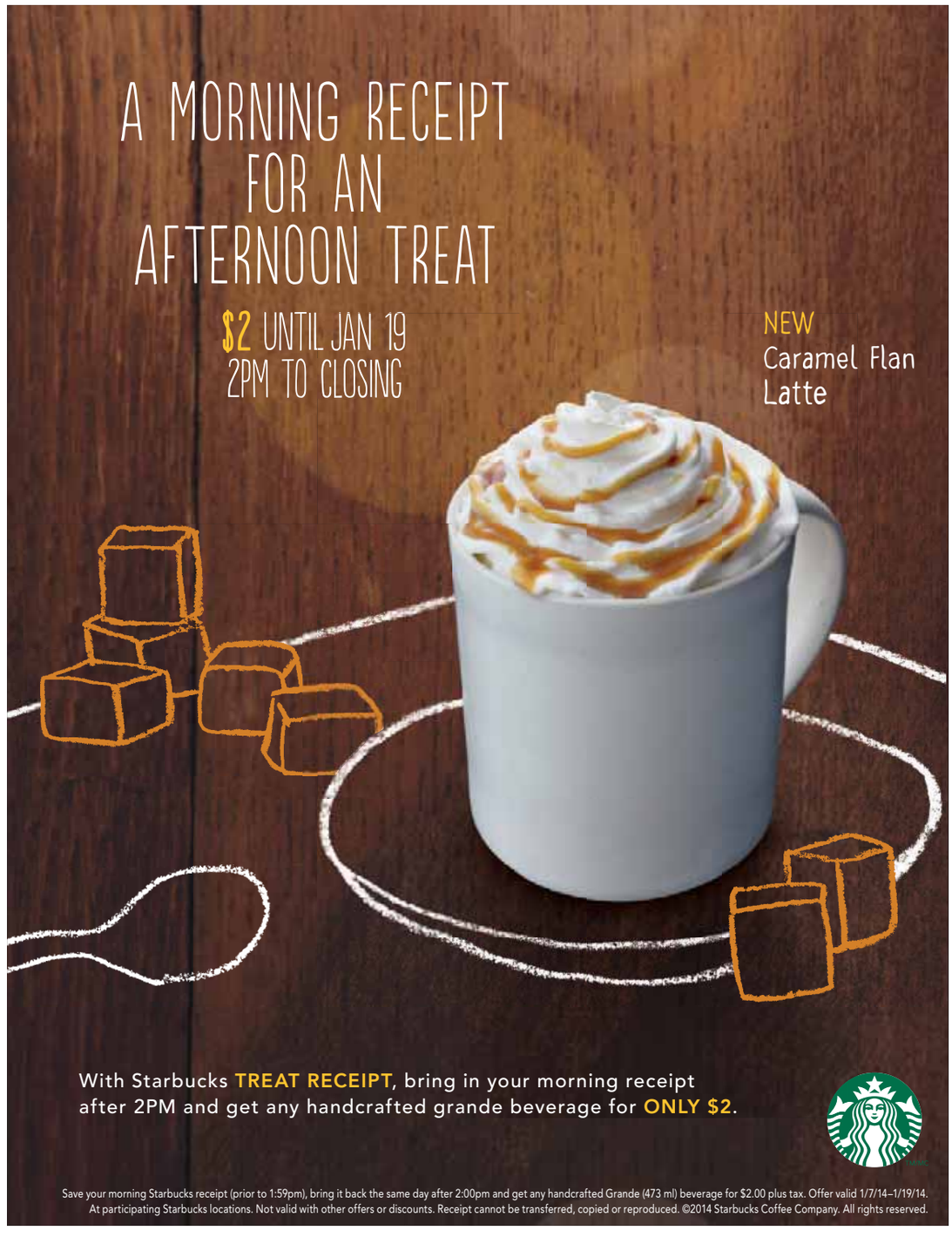
'Mistake' that let protesters get close to PM has been fixed: RCMP

The RCMP says it has identified and fixed the "mistake" that allowed two climate-change protesters to walk onto a stage within touching distance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

However, the force isn't saying just what the mistake was or what specifically was done to prevent it from happening again.

RCMP Cpl. Lucy Shorey says in a statement that the force continues to review the incident, and it has implemented changes to ensure it doesn't happen again.

THE CANADIAN PRESS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Ontario

Senior found after snowstorm

A 70-year-old Leamington, Ont., man who disappeared during a snowstorm on Monday has been found alive.

John Friesen and his pickup truck were found Tuesday after he spent a night and much of the next day buried in a snowdrift in frigid temperatures.

Police say he was conscious but suffering from extreme cold.

CKLW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pennsylvania

Pills on order from pizza shop

A pizza shop in Ligonier, Penn., has been delivering medicine and other supplies to ill and elderly residents so they don't have to go outside in the cold.

Tom Wynkoop, owner of Fox's Pizza Den, tells WPXI-TV he tweeted his offer because his community has a lot of elderly residents.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kosovo. Severe winter drought leaves drinking water in short supply

A boat lies stranded on the shores of the Batllava artificial lake in northern Kosovo on Wednesday. VISAR KRYEZIU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In 2013, winter brought heavy rains and flooding to Kosovo. The year before that, it was blizzards and snow drifts. Now it's a drought.

An official said Wednesday that some 400,000 people in and around Pristina, the capital, could face reduced supplies of drinking water, given a dramatic fall in the levels of the two artificial basins they get it from.

Arieta Mjeku, a spokeswoman for the regional water supply company, said strict reductions must be imposed if the winter drought continues. Mjeku said some areas are already on limited water supply.

Mid-January could bring much-needed snow, but the receding waters in the two lakes have exposed large sections of cracked, dry earth.

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Dennis Rodman sings Happy Birthday to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. KIM KWANG HYON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rodman serenades North Korean leader

Basketball diplomacy. Former NBA player Dennis Rodman hopes to forge connections through the sport

Dennis Rodman sang Happy Birthday to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un before leading a squad of former NBA stars in a friendly game Wednesday as part of his "basketball diplomacy" that has been criticized in the United States as naive and laughable.

Rodman dedicated the game to his "best friend" Kim, who along with his wife and other senior officials and their wives, watched from a special seating area. The capacity crowd of about 14,000 at the Pyongyang Indoor Stadium clapped loudly as Rodman sang a verse from the birthday song.

Rodman said he was honoured to be able to play the game in the North Korean capital and called the event "historic." Some members of the U.S. Congress, the NBA and human rights groups, however, say he has become a public relations tool for North Korea's government.

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In Person
Ishmael Beah

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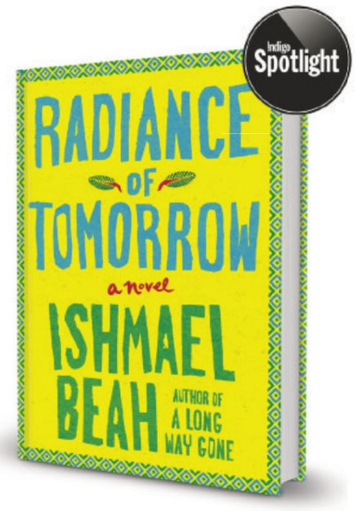

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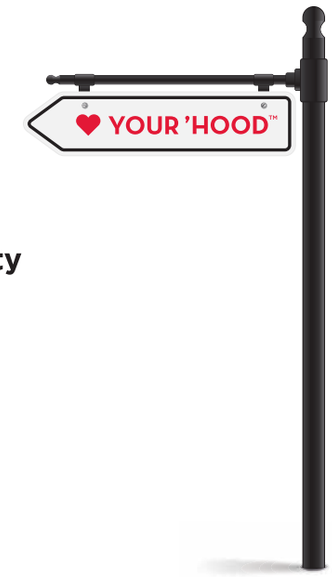

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Facebook losing Canadian fans

Thumbs down.
We are not all liking the social media network these days, survey finds

Canadians are not giving Facebook many thumbs up lately. GETTY IMAGES

Facebook may be the world's biggest social network, and particularly popular in Canada, but there are still plenty of Canadian holdouts who refuse to join or have logged off permanently, suggests recently released research.

One in three Canadian Internet users told pollsters that they did not use Facebook in the previous month, according to a report by the Media Technology Monitor, based on telephone surveys with more than 4,000 Canadians last spring.

Of them, 14 per cent said they used to have a Facebook account but quit, 16 per cent said they're technically still a member but rarely use the site and 70 per cent said they never joined at all.

Younger non-Facebook users were more likely to have abandoned their profiles.

Poll respondents between 18 and 24 who said they weren't using Facebook were 10 times more likely to have dropped their account, rather than having never signed up in the first place.

When respondents were asked why they quit Facebook, the most common response was they didn't find the site useful, followed by privacy concerns and a lack of time to engage with the site.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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OWN THE IRRATIONAL REACTION

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

It's almost time for the Olympics, which for many people is the only time they care about sports aside from hilarious ball-to-the-groin videos on YouTube.

That means some of you might have felt adrift this week as Canada announced its Olympic hockey team, an event that left hockey fans buzzing like my 20-year-old fridge.

Everyone likes to cheer for their country, but if you're not obsessed with hockey the rest of the time, than joining the heated conversations at home and the workplace can be tricky.

To help, I've compiled this primer for newbie Olympic hockey watchers about what they should say during the tournament to blend right in:

What to say during Olympic hockey:

The No. 1 rule to remember is that there can be no rational analysis of a world hockey tournament.

Canadian hockey history is rife with late, one-goal victories that somehow taught us that Canada is an unstoppable, dominant force in world hockey. It's also replete with shootout losses and other hard-fought defeats that taught us our national hockey program is a disaster that must be burned to the ground.

There is no middle ground, even if the outcome of the game came down to random chance.

Remember this when the games start. You might feel nervous about complicated discussions about matchups, statistics, etc., but those are just a smokescreen of facts that hide the three irrational pillars of hockey discussion: momentum, heart and clutch.

These might sound like intangible nonsense that would be impossible to measure or even ascertain, but shut up.

Wrong: "These are two evenly matched teams and there is no discernible momentum."

Right: Whichever team has most recently scored "has all the momentum."

Wrong: "It's overtime, so it's going to come down to random chance as two teams give it their all."

Right: "It's overtime, so it's going to come down to which team has the most heart."

Wrong: "I bet Sidney Crosby wins it because the highest scoring player is the player most likely to score now too."

Right: "I bet Sidney Crosby wins it because he's so clutch."

And that's how to speak like a true hockey fan.

One last lesson: If you come across a newspaper columnist or other unpatriotic liberal who questions any of these truisms, your surefire response is to say, "Clearly you've never played the game," and then walk away. With that sort of momentum, you could be a TV hockey commentator in no time.

Assuming, of course, that you're clutch.

ZOOM

Dark clouds hanging overhead

ULET IFANSASTI/GETTY IMAGES

Volcano erupts in Indonesia, again

Mount Sinabung spews pyroclastic smoke, seen from Sibintun village on Wednesday in Karo District, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

The number of displaced people has increased to 22,000 in Western Indonesia as Mount Sinabung continues to spew ash and smoke after several eruptions since September. Eleven deaths have now been recorded as a result of the eruptions, with hundreds more falling ill. Officials expect the number of evacuees to rise as volcanic activity remains high.

Sinabung had lain dormant for 400 years before a re-awakening eruption in 2010. Sinabung is one of nearly 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia that straddle key tectonic fault lines known as the Pacific Ring of Fire.

The deadliest eruption in recent years was of Mount Merapi in 2010 near the densely populated city of Yogyakarta, which killed 350 people.

GETTY IMAGES

A man wears a plastic bag to cover his head after his village was smothered by ash. GETTY IMAGES

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

Health, wellness and wearable tech are colliding in full force at this year's Consumer Electronic Show, with a healthy portion of products geared toward the digitally-inclined fitness diehards. Look out Fitbit and FuelBand, there are some new kids on the starting block.

CONTRIBUTED

Skulpt Aim:

Knowing how many clicks you've run and calories you've burned is just part of the health equation. Knowing the effects of your hard work is the other. Press this phone-size gadget to your freshly pumped muscles to get an instant (and accurate, they say) reading of your body composition.

Tinke:

Again, for those beyond measuring simple kms and cals, Tinke reads heart rate, blood oxygen levels and respiratory rate with just the tap of your thumb (accuracy may be questionable on this one).

Bracelets:

LG, Sony, Razer and even Intel have launched fitness tracking bracelets, all taking various metrics of your activities which connect to varying degrees with your smartphone.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: @jimmykimmel dumped snow on L.A. beach goers who bragged about the warm climate. What is a suitable penalty for bragging?

@yelpcalgary: Ha. Californians are just jealous of our awesome touques.

@ehbsea: One hour in a walk in freezer in their beach wear

@adam_rizk: A big enough star he could've had a following to Sequoia, Yosemite mountains & left them there LYAO!

@sarahmeaghang: They should have gotten "face-washes"

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metro

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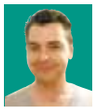
SCENE 2

From Mamma Yamma to showing off some of her Favourite Things

Ali Eisner. Onscreen performer shows her creative side behind the camera in photography exhibit



BACKSTAGE PASS
Ian Gormely
scene@metronews.ca

Nine months ago, Ali Eisner followed through on a dream many of us have had: She quit her job to pursue her passion.

A puppeteer who helped develop CBC Kids' program Mamma Yamma, Eisner finally sees her gamble bear fruit this week as she launches her debut photo exhibition at the Gladstone Hotel.

"My goal for 2014 is to start stretching out on all the other creative things that I've always wanted to do," she says. "Having a photography show was something that I'd always wanted."

Eisner is best known for her performance work at the CBC and as Jay the Blue Jay on TV Ontario's Gisele's Big Backyard, but her creative endeavors started behind the camera.

Her father, "a closet photographer," helped Eisner develop her own style.

"I've been shooting for years out of just joy," she says, adding it can be a welcome change from performing. "Your goal is to be invisible. It's neat to do something so quiet."

Called Favourite Things, Eisner's exhibition collects pictures from the last few years of her life, from vacations with her superhero-loving musician wife, Christine Bougie, to the set of Mamma Yamma.

She says she enjoys the emotional spectrum afforded to children's programming.

Fittingly, Favourite Things runs the emotional gamut, from goofy shots of musician Joel Plaskett dressed up as a hot dog to more serious images.

"There is darkness," she admits, "but it takes up a small piece of the show."

Photography will continue to occupy a big part of her time, but music looms largest in Eisner's immediate future.

She and Bougie recently finished some score work and plan to make a record together.

"I like to do a lot of different things," she says.

"That way, my brain won't burn out on one, and doing something else gives me perspective on the other."

The Flash is one of Ali Eisner's photo in her Favourite Things exhibit. CONTRIBUTED

When & where

- **Favourite Things:** To Jan. 19, 12-5 p.m. at the Gladstone Hotel Art Bar, 1214 Queen St. West. Opening reception tonight, 7 p.m. See gladstonehotel.com for details.

Digital vs. film

Eisner shoots with a Nikon digital camera, but she learned to take photos the old-fashioned way, using film that needed to be developed in a dark room.

"It's really weird the relationship between when you know you only have a certain number of shots versus now," she says.

Her father helped her build a dark room so she could fully realize her budding passion. That's all gone now.

"But I try not to abuse the digital option," she says. "It's really boring going through a million shots."

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Laura Vandervoort plays werewolf Elena Michaels in Bitten. CONTRIBUTED

Bitten star sinks her teeth into female werewolf role

Laura Vandervoort. Actress talks about the nuances of a role traditionally reserved for men

Werewolves have been howling loudly at the spotlight in recent years through various films and TV series — Twilight, True Blood and The Mortal Instruments to name but a few.

But the sexy new supernatural thriller Bitten offers a rarely seen take on the moon monster mythology: a furry female lead.

The werewolf figure is well suited to women because both are "so affected by mother Earth and the cycles" and face societal pressures concerning image, says Laura Vandervoort, the Toronto native who stars as the four-legged fanged protagonist Elena Michaels.

"(Elena is) suppressing this animal inside of her and trying to just maintain this perfect facade, whereas her true self is in New York as this werewolf and just letting loose, and I think a lot of women have trouble being themselves," she said in a recent telephone interview.

"So it's interesting if you think about it from that perspective while watching it, that she's trying to keep this perfect image."

Vandervoort's Elena is an orphan who grew up in the foster care system in the U.S. and became a werewolf when a professor with whom she fell in love (Greyston Holt) bit her to protect her.

In the series premiere, she's working as a photographer in Toronto and trying to carry on a new life away from her wolf pack in upstate New York.

She gets sucked back into life with the pack, though, when a "random mutt" breaks the rules by killing humans for sport and her strong tracking skills are needed to catch the culprit.

Watch it

Bitten premiers Saturday at 9 p.m. ET on Space in Canada. The series is based on the New York Times bestselling Women of the Otherworld novels by Canadian Kelley Armstrong.

Co-stars include Greg Bryk as pack head Jeremy, Paul Greene as Elena's unsuspecting boyfriend Philip and Michael Xavier as Elena's therapist and fellow pack member Logan.

"It's very Sopranos, True Blood," said Vandervoort, who grew up in Toronto's North York area and is the third cousin of acting great Gordon Pinsent.

"It's an adult show and it's about the relationships and not just the fact that we're werewolves. It's the family dynamic.

"It's protecting your family at all costs. And if that means murder, as much as Elena hates who she is, you protect your pack."

The Los Angeles-based Vandervoort, who's twice made Maxim's list of Top 100 hottest women, came to the series after playing key roles on series including the Instant Star, Smallville and V.

With a second-degree black belt in Shotokan karate, she did "93 per cent" of her own stunts "except falling down the stairs."

"It's such a vast range for a female to get to play on television that I loved going to work every day and coming home and being exhausted but feeling like, 'Wow, I did that and I didn't think I was capable.'" THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Doc reveals the big business of divorce

Divorce Corp.
Film looks at how the current U.S. system encourages battle-style breakups

MEREDITH ENGEL
Metro World News in New York City

Dr. Drew Pinsky is the narrator in Divorce Corp. GETTY IMAGES

"The biggest single reason for divorce in (the U.S.) is marriage," divorce attorney Gerald Nissenbaum says at the outset of the new documentary, Divorce Corp. But the film's narrator, Dr. Drew Pinsky, tells Metro that attitude is "cynicism I'm trying to undo."

"We need sustained, committed, healthy, regulated, happy relationships over long periods of time to raise stable adults," argues Dr. Drew, who described Divorce Corp. as an in-depth profile of the "unbelievably dysfunctional" divorce industry.

Though known to many for his work as an addiction specialist, Dr. Drew says tackling divorce wasn't too far-fetched a career move for him because it furthers his commitment to "championing stable and healthy relationships."

And once exposed to the material — like the fact that more money passes through family law court than all other U.S. courts combined — he was taken aback.

"There is this self-serving industry that really has very little interest in the individuals who are getting divorced," he says, adding that the business of splitting up "incurs lying and fighting" and encourages unethical practices, like dragging out cases so that lawyers and judges can profit off them much longer than necessary. According to the film, attorneys, who can charge upward of $500 per hour, are many times in cahoots with presiding judges, which means fairness often takes a backseat to cronyism.

"The judges themselves are deeply, in inappropriate ways, involved," Dr. Drew says. "I mean, if this was a medical system, there'd be people in prison. We're not allowed to do anything like that."

So how can these people get away with their practices? Divorce courts are courts of equity, not courts of law, so constitutional rights aren't always held up. That means if you can't afford an attorney, you won't get one.

Dr. Drew says that the industry wasn't established with malicious intent, but it's "played out this way and it needs reform." He's hopeful that at the least the film will inspire conversation about what that reform could look like. And it seems some people are catching on: victims of family court and high-profile attorneys like Gloria Allred speak up in the film about shady practices.

Dr. Drew's marriage tips

- **Recognize your bias.** "If you come from divorce, you're much more likely to have divorce, particularly if you marry somebody who comes from divorce."
- **Use your resources.** "I think mental health services work. You should be getting pre-marital counselling and should be committing to mental health services when you get in trouble rather than heading toward the door."

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Meryl on playing a malevolent matriarch

August: Osage County. Streep says she wasn't up for being the villain at first

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York

August: Osage County is an ensemble film, with big-name actors crowded into every inch of the screen. But most of the attention has drifted, inevitably, toward its matriarch, not the least because she's played by Meryl Streep.

As Violet Weston, whose dysfunctional family packs into her remote Oklahoma home in the wake of her husband's suicide, she's a pill-popping monster, short-tempered and prone to speak her mind, which is usually crammed with wicked thoughts she mistakes for tough truths. This may sound more fun that it is.

"As an actor, you're supposed to want to go to the house of pain over and over and over again," Streep explains. "But it's not something that's fun. I resisted doing this initially, because of that. I just thought, ugh."

While everyone who plays her daughters, including Julia Roberts, Juliette Lewis and Julianne Nicholson, got along swimmingly, she still felt her character's pain. "It wasn't the most joyous experience from my point of view," she says.

Adding to the tension was shooting while hurricane Sandy raged and the presidential election occurred in the outside world. "It was important to make a connection beyond the set. Also, I was smoking nonstop, which really makes you feel s—."

She even felt a bit of jealousy, especially in comparison to Chris Cooper's far more likable brother-in-law. "He would imbue (his character) with his enormous humanity and compassion. And I knew the audience would love him. And I knew they would hate me in equal measure."

She says one of the more upsetting scenes was the first one in the film, with her husband, played by Sam Sheppard, before he kills himself.

"To look at him close up and see his loathing of me, that was really hard," she says. "You still think that maybe there's a spark of love from this person who's gone through everything with you. And to look in his eyes and realize he'd rather be dead than look at you, that was brutal. That sort of set the tone for dealing with his death and everything afterwards."

This said, the play's source — by Tracy Letts, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize — is still a comedy. "The humour's borne out of pain. But you still want your laughs. Every single actor came to the first reading with a copy of the original play in their back pocket, with their lines highlighted that had been cut." They even begged Letts, who adapted the play himself for the screen, to reinstitute key laugh lines.

And while the film, like the play, is more outsized in its grotesquery than most family get-togethers, it's still supposed to be, Streep assures, relatable. "It's like when you come together with your friends after Thanksgiving, and you say, 'I have to tell you what my mother said!' And you tell a story that was not funny when you were there, but in the telling it's fabulous. That's how you transform your life. Because if you can't laugh about this stuff…"

Quoted

"I resisted doing this initially because of that. I just thought, ugh."

Meryl Streep on not wanting to play an evil mother in the film.

Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts star in August: Osage County. CONTRIBUTED

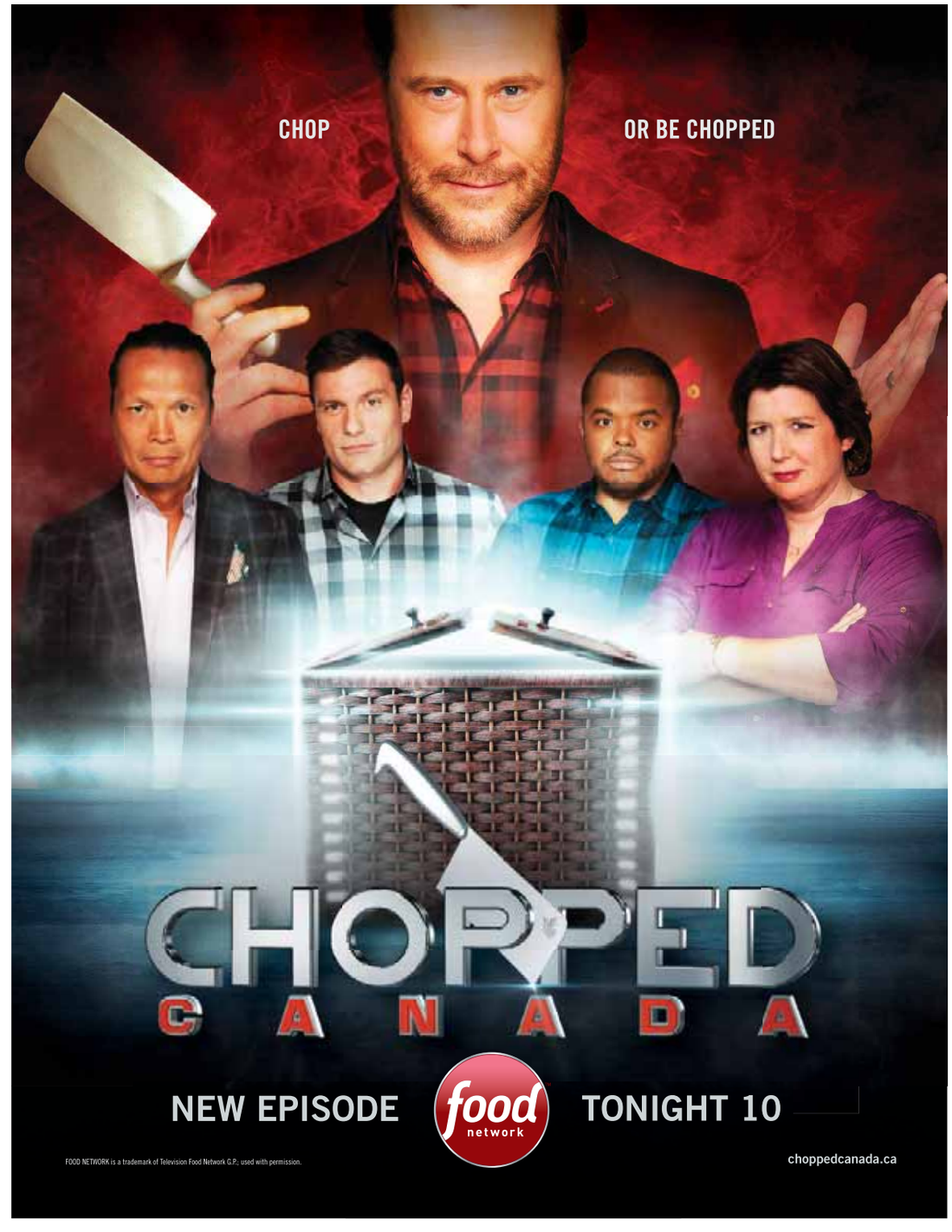
Music

Timberlake, Thicke kings of 2013

Justin Timberlake and Robin Thicke owned 2013 in music.

Nielsen Entertainment announced late Tuesday that Timberlake's The 20/20 Experience was the top-selling album with 2.4 million units sold. Thicke's ubiquitous Blurred Lines was the bestselling song with 6.4 million tracks sold. Albums sales were down. Only 289.4 million albums were sold in 2013, compared with 316 million a year before. Single tracks also saw a decrease, by 6 per cent. Streaming, however, was up 32 per cent.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Selena Gomez ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Gomez thought to be back in Bieber's arms after devastating diagnosis

Just why are Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber back to canoodling? Sources say it's because of Gomez's recent lupus diagnosis. "Justin reached out to Selena after she cancelled the tour," a Bieber insider tells Life & Style, referring to Gomez cancelling her 2014 Stars Dance tour last month, reportedly after she got the diagnosis of the autoimmune disease. "He wanted to make sure she was OK and healthy. He cares about her a lot. I don't know if they'll get back together, but he wanted to see her and spend time with her."

The Word

Paul's got some party haul but this one was a real thriller

Aaron Paul has been to some impressive parties, but one sticks out particularly for the Breaking Bad star. "It was the Prince of Brunei's 25th birthday party. Six years ago, outside of London," he tells Details magazine. Paul, who attended as another guest's plus-one, entertained himself by chasing sheep around the castle and breaking the Prince's hovercraft. He certainly made an impression: "I was going back up to my room, and this guy grabs me and says, 'Hey, Prince Azim wants to see you in the library,'" Paul says. "So I go down there, and he's sitting on the couch with Michael Jackson, and me and Michael Jackson end up having this hour-long heart-to-heart about family and upbringings, and I remember, he just put his arm around my shoulder and said, 'You know, if you've had a rough childhood or not, it's all about forgiveness. Once you realize that, it's fine. Everything's fine.' And I'm like, 'Michael, you are absolutely right. Do you want to do a shot?' And he goes 'Sure!'"

Twitter

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When someone says "It isn't you, it's me"....It's you

@JuddApatow
How do I avoid this freaking stomach flu? I am not a big fan of multiple days of vomiting.

@MarkDuplass
Milquetoast. Great word. Underutilized.

Jake Gyllenhaal

Gyllenhaal's relationship with model 'fizzled out'

Jake Gyllenhaal has reportedly split up with model Alyssa Miller after six months of dating, according to Us Weekly. "They fizzled out. It happened a while back — before the holidays. He's back on the scene," a source says. "Things were really good between Jake and Alyssa right up until he had to leave for L.A. to shoot a movie in the fall. Then the distance just really got to them." Reps for Gyllenhaal and Miller did not respond to requests for comment.

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Every sharp shopper has a calendar in the closet

Seasonal secrets. Style expert Lilliana Vazquez shares tips on mapping out your 2014 shopping plan

ANDREA PARK
Metro World News

There is a right time and a wrong time to buy those shoes you've been eyeing, and even if you made a New Year's resolution to save money in 2014, that doesn't mean you have to sacrifice style. Lilliana Vazquez, style expert and author of The Cheap Chica's Guide to Style, shares her tips on planning a shopping schedule for the year and how you can save money on hot wardrobe staples with just a bit of good timing.

January

Winter coats and accessories
This frosty month is the perfect time to buy warm winter goods. "Whether it's a brand new coat, hats, scarves, gloves, boots or ski stuff, items get really marked down in January but in a city like New York, we'll probably still be wearing these until April," says Vazquez.

Formal wear
"Anyone who was selling New Year's and holiday party stuff still has a lot of merchandise, so this is the best time of the year to buy a cocktail dress," says Vazquez. She added that it's an especially great time to save on anything sparkly or beaded.

February

Spring items
Believe it or not, February is a great month to buy spring items. Vazquez says though this is when stores get their first shipments of spring clothes, retailers will mark them down if no one is buying. "You can get new stuff marked down if it's really cold out," Vazquez says.

Winter clearance
If you still need winter clothes, this is when winter gear is on final mark down. The merchandise will already be picked over, but it will be at its cheapest.

Leap on that LBD ASAP!

"Anyone who was selling New Year's and holiday party stuff still has a lot of merchandise, so this is the best time of the year to buy a cocktail dress."
Lilliana Vazquez

March and April

Shoes
Get a head start on summer shoe shopping in March and April, when the selection is the largest. Stores will offer some early markdowns, and those sandals you've had your eye on may be gone by May.

Fitness gear
"A lot of (sneakers and fitness items) come in for the New Year's resolutions of people who say they're going to work out and then never do, so if you're a runner or gearing up for the summer, it's a great time to buy sneakers and fitness fashion items," says Vazquez. She added that this is when Lululemon fans can buy their favourite brand on deep discount.

May

Secondhand items
May is a big month for spring cleaning, which means that lots of people are getting rid of their clothes and accessories, and one man's trash is another man's treasure, right? "A lot of people are cleaning out, so it's a good time to deal hunt in your neighbourhood," says Vazquez. "You can get vintage stuff and great shoes because they're making room in their closets for all new things."

Lilliana Vazquez, author of The Cheap Chica's Guide to Style. GETTY IMAGES

June and July

Summer items
Fall items will be trickling into stores by now, which means you can find great deals on summer clothes and accessories. "You can get stuff you can get a lot of use out of, like shorts, rompers and sundresses — things that feel seasonal," says Vazquez.

Swimsuits
Stores will still carry plenty of swimsuits, but they'll be marked down by June and July. "You'll still wear them for another two or three months," pointed out Vazquez.

Thinking ahead

- **Summer's end** Vazquez called this "back-to-school summer leftover time." Inventory will be a mixed bag of summer odds and ends without much size availability, but this is when you can get the best deals on summer clearance items. Plus, you'll find discounts on new inventory during back-to-school and Labour Day promotions.
- **Baby, it's cold outside** November is a big shopping month with Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Vazquez says this is when she saves up for her big, pricey purchases like cashmere sweaters. "These deals I only splurge on once a year because I can wear them for a long time, so it's a great value proposition for my closet," she says.

December's diamonds
Vazquez says that December is the last chance for retailers to grab customers for their year-end earnings reports, which means holiday sales abound. This is an especially good time to get "no size" gifts like hats, bags, gloves and scarves for friends and family.

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Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Lexi

Age: 27

Occupation: Special event coordinator

What she's wearing
Gift of Love knit scarf, vintage Bridge and Bardot plaid shirt, Zara blouse, American Apparel tights, Jeffrey Campbell booties.

Her inspiration
"I have always gravitated toward bohemian-style clothing. However, the truth is the majority of my closet is from vintage thrift stores. I love digging for old classic pieces that tell stories and bring a little 'umph' to the outfit. I am also a huge fan of comfort and free frolicking. Therefore, if I can't bend and snap in a piece of clothing, I will not buy."

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Carlaw coming into its own as an urban cultural village

Hotspot. A number of new developments are transforming this inner-city neighbourhood

CONDO TRENDS
Duncan McAllister
life@metronews.ca

An artist's rendering of the Carlaw Towns. CONTRIBUTED

The post-industrial neighbourhood just east of Toronto's downtown core is turning into an urban cultural hotspot.

Carlaw Avenue between Queen and Gerrard streets has long been a legacy manufacturing area with red-brick factories and warehouses. It eventually morphed into a stretch of lofts housing a bohemian community of artisans, musicians and craftspeople. Fast-forward two decades and Carlaw is shaping up to be a new inner-city condo and cultural village.

It's in a weird location, tucked away on the upper edge of Leslieville, kind of in the Film District and east of Riverside. What makes this a colourful neighbourhood with tons of potential are the niche boutique shops, cool java joints like the River Rock Café and the Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club for women.

Streetcar Developments is planning a number of projects in the area. The Carlaw Towns, for example, will be a 300-plus-unit project just around the corner from Queen. "There's this whole urban infill happening in the Leslieville area and especially around Carlaw," says Streetcar spokesperson Harley Nakelsky.

Next year, Streetcar will be unveiling another 96-unit condo called the Taylor. The aim is to animate the street with a variety of "baked-in" entertainment options. Between the two buildings at street level is the new Crows Theatre, with plans for a restaurant and a venue hall.

"There's a whole change in the area where a lot more condominium projects are coming up. We're typically a mid-rise developer and the area is perfect for mid-rise," says Nakelsky.

The statuesque Worklofts by Lamb Development Corp. was completed in 2011 and has 153 units. The fully finished commercial lofts are designed to live or work in.

Forged from steel and concrete and finished with brick and glass, Flatiron Lofts is the second phase of Worklofts and was finished in 2012 to complete the transformation at Dundas and Carlaw. The suites feature stainless steel appliances, engineered hardwood floors, granite kitchen counters and gas hook-ups in the kitchen and balconies.

An artist's rendering of the Flatiron Lofts. CONTRIBUTED

Another prominent Carlaw development is the Showcase Lofts by Aragon Properties Ltd. Located at Carlaw and Colgate just around the corner from Queen, the 230 loft-style condominiums with red-brick frontage are designed to blend in with the architecture of the street. With nine-foot ceilings and engineered hardwood flooring throughout, these homes also feature G.E. Café stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops and reclaimed-brick interior feature walls.

An artist's rendering of The Nest. CONTRIBUTED

Nesting in the heart of Hillcrest

Meet the condo

- **What.** The Nest condominiums
- **Location.** St. Clair Avenue West in Hillcrest Village
- **Builder.** Rockport Group
- **Architect.** Raw Design
- **Sizes.** From 444 to 1,182 sq. ft.
- **Pricing.** From $238,900 to $765,900
- **Building.** 9 storeys with 122 units
- **Occupancy.** Winter-spring 2016
- **Website.** thenestcondos.com

The project overview

The Nest is Rockport's new midtown, nine-storey, low-rise condo project in the Hillcrest Village neighbourhood. The range of units will suit young professionals, couples and small families.

Building amenities

The condo will feature a rooftop indoor and outdoor amenity space, fitness room, pet spa room, designer-decorated guest suite, car-share facility, eight-hour executive concierge, security service and more.

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Big, bold design trends for the new year

This year brings big changes on the home decor front. We'll say goodbye to espresso wood and cool grey colours while welcoming lighter woods, warmer walls and coloured, artful rugs. These trends will hold strong for a few years, so keep them in mind for future decorating projects. Here are four key ones worth investing in over the next year and beyond.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Lighter wood tones

Goodbye dark espresso wood tones and hello lighter, natural oak. No, not the honey-golden oak from the '80s: think grainy, raw oak with a simple coat of wax. Pagan's Dance brushed, engineered wide plank flooring, $13.75 per square foot, kentwoodfloors.com.

Warmer paint colours

The new neutral is platinum. Think grey with a dollop of brown to warm it up. Looks great with almost every other colour. Escarpment CC-518, benjaminmoore.ca.

Bolder, artful rugs

Go bold or don't bring it home. Art and rugs are going big and bold. It's time to wake up our spaces, so think of colourful rugs as artwork for the floor. Kashmir 8x10 orange wool rug, $363, ecarpetgallery.com.

Golden metal finishes

Metal tones are warming up, so go with polished gold for a luxe vibe or tarnished brass for a casual, industrial look. Graham Table Lamp, $338, crateandbarrel.ca.

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Cookbook of the Week

Get excited about eating healthy

Weight Watchers cookbooks are trusted by anyone who is excited about cooking delicious, healthy food.

This latest offering serves up more than 280 favourites that have been updated, and feature fresh ingredients, how-to tips, Weight Watchers lore, and nutritional info and PointsPlus values for the newest program, Weight Watchers 360°.

Among the dishes included are Cajun Catfish, Cheese Puffs, Curried Vegetable Stew, Lamb Kebobs, Classic Red Velvet Cake, and more. **METRO**

For your phone

The Biscuit Baker (iPad; $1.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

Complement your dog's diet with some homemade treats. These 25 recipes offer up biscuits flavoured with beef stew, chicken pie and apple bacon. Check with your vet before you bake.

Southern classic, without the fat

This recipe serves six. One chop with 1/4 cup sauce contains 253 calories and 11 grams total fat.

"Pork chops in onion sauce is a Southern classic, but often it is swimming in too much fat," write the Weight Watchers folks in the book Weight Watchers 50th Anniversary Cookbook of this Skillet Pork Chops with Onion Gravy recipe.

"We gave the dish a healthy makeover that retains all the great flavour but with a mere one teaspoon of oil. Think of it as comfort food that you can really feel comfortable with!"

Ingredients

- 4 (6-oz) bone-in porkloin chops, trimmed
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 sweet onions, thinly sliced
- 1 1/4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp whole-grain Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme

1. Sprinkle the chops with the salt and pepper. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Swirl in the oil, add the chops and cook, turning occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

2. Add the onions, 1/4 cup of the broth, and the garlic to the skillet. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until the onions are very tender, 12–15 minutes.

3. Sprinkle the onions with the flour; cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Add the remaining 1 cup broth, mustard, and thyme. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sauce bubbles and thickens. Return the chops and any accumulated juices to the skillet. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until the chops are heated through, 2–3 minutes.

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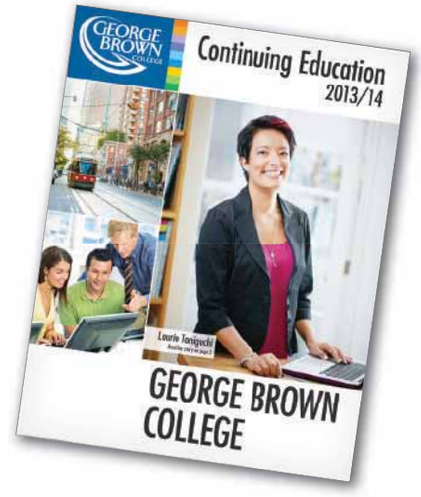

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SPORTS 4

Raptors rev back up to top form vs. Pistons

NBA. With balanced effort from starters, Toronto pulls away after second-half surge

On Wednesday

112	91
Raptors	Pistons

Jonas Valanciunas had 16 points and 11 rebounds while Kyle Lowry scored 21 points as the Toronto Raptors defeated the Detroit Pistons 112-91 on Wednesday night.

The Raptors (17-17) needed strong performances from Valanciunas and Lowry. DeMar DeRozan and Amir Johnson combined to shoot 0 for 16 from the floor in the first half with the team making just 33 per cent of their field goals compared to 47 per cent shooting from the Pistons.

Brandon Jennings led the way for Detroit (14-22), scoring 22 points to go with nine assists in the loss. Andre Drummond added 16 rebounds as the Pistons lost their sixth straight.

After going up 11 midway through the second quarter, the Raptors went more than five minutes without a field goal and allowed Detroit to go on a 14-0 run to take a 54-50 lead at the half.

Things flipped in the third when the Raptors outscored Detroit 34-20. DeRozan and Johnson were able to shake off their cold starts to help Toronto build a 10-point advantage going into the fourth.

Toronto broke the game open in the final quarter. All five of Toronto's starters finished the game in double figures after the team dropped its last two contests against the Miami Heat and Indiana Pacers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

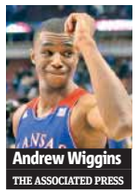
Jonas Valanciunas blocks former Raptors forward Charlie Villanueva during Toronto's win over the Pistons on Wednesday night at Air Canada Centre. RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Big 12. Kansas rolls despite star Wiggins' rough night

Wayne Selden Jr. had a career-high 24 points as No. 18 Kansas started Big 12 Conference play with a 90-83 win over Oklahoma on Wednesday night.

Kansas won its conference opener for the 23rd straight year. Oklahoma, in 1991, was the last team to beat the Jayhawks in a conference opener.

Kansas didn't seem bothered by a subpar game from Thornhill's Andrew Wiggins. The star freshman went 2 of 9 from the field for nine points, just the second time this season he failed to reach double digits. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Andrew Wiggins THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Soccer. After weeks away, Messi hasn't missed a beat

Lionel Messi marked his return from a near two-month injury absence by coming off the bench to score two late goals as Barcelona beat Getafe 4-0 in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday.

Cesc Fabregas also scored twice, but the atmosphere at Camp Nou only picked up with Messi's entrance in the 64th minute. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lionel Messi celebrates scoring FC Barcelona's fourth goal on Wednesday in Barcelona. GETTY IMAGES

Baseball

Maddux, Glavine, Thomas heading to the Hall of Fame

Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and Frank Thomas were elected to baseball's Hall of Fame on Wednesday, while Craig Biggio fell two votes short and tainted stars of the Steroids Era remained far behind. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A ballot for the people

"I always like a little anarchy inside the cathedral we've made of sports."

ESPN host Dan Le Batard, who acknowledged Wednesday he gave his baseball Hall of Fame ballot to the website Deadspin because he detests the "hypocrisy" in the voting process. Le Batard confirmed he let Deadspin readers decide who he would vote for. Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine were on Le Batard's ballot, as was Craig Biggio.

UCI

Independent panel looking into doping allegations

A three-man independent panel will investigate cycling's doping past, including allegations the sport's governing body colluded with Lance Armstrong.

UCI president Brian Cookson said Wednesday the commission will investigate allegations "that the UCI has been involved in wrongdoing in the past — allegations which have done so much to hurt the credibility of the UCI and our sport." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Sochi won't be their first rodeo

Canadian Cowboys.
Veteran skiers Hudec, Osborne-Paradis, Guay back in Olympic saddle after fixing 'all the bugs and the kinks'

Manuel Osborne-Paradis will anchor Canada's men's alpine team in Sochi.
NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian skier Manuel Osborne-Paradis learned how it felt to compete on the sport's biggest stage during his Olympic debut in Turin eight years ago.

He learned about pressure and expectations at the 2010 Games in his hometown of Vancouver.

His next mission is to build on that experience at his next Olympic appearance in Sochi, where he plans to ride the momentum from the team's strong start to the season.

"In Vancouver there was a lot of prep but not very directed prep," he said Wednesday. "I think this year we've really fixed all the bugs and the kinks that we felt in Vancouver. Obviously there's not as much pressure, not being in Canada and being as far away (from) Canada as pretty much possible.

"I think the nerves are a lot more settled and hopefully we're able to direct the energy down the hill and not towards the media."

The veteran skier will anchor the men's alpine team at the Games along with Erik Guay of Mont-Tremblant, Que., and Calgary's Jan Hudec. The three "Canadian Cowboys" were officially nominated to the Sochi 2014 Olympic team Wednesday.

Some of their teammates still have a chance to join them in Sochi. The qualification window is open until Jan. 26 and the roster is expected to be finalized the next day.

Guay had the top Canadian result at the Vancouver Games, finishing fifth in the downhill and the super-G. Osborne-Paradis was 17th in the downhill and didn't finish the super-G, while Hudec didn't crack the top 20 in either discipline. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

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	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	43	28	13	2	126	94	58
Tampa Bay	43	26	13	4	123	102	56
Montreal	45	25	15	5	115	106	55
Detroit	43	19	14	10	114	121	48
Toronto	44	21	18	5	122	132	47
Ottawa	44	19	18	7	126	141	45
Florida	43	16	21	6	102	136	38
Buffalo	42	12	26	4	74	118	28

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	45	32	12	1	147	107	65
Philadelphia	44	23	17	4	117	119	50
Washington	42	20	16	6	128	128	46
Carolina	43	18	16	9	105	124	45
N.Y. Rangers	44	21	20	3	108	119	45
New Jersey	44	17	18	9	103	113	43
Columbus	43	19	20	4	117	126	42
N.Y. Islanders	45	16	22	7	124	149	39

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	45	29	7	9	167	124	67
St. Louis	42	30	7	5	155	97	65
Colorado	42	26	12	4	123	108	56
Minnesota	45	23	17	5	108	114	51
Dallas	42	20	15	7	123	131	47
Nashville	44	19	19	6	105	131	44
Winnipeg	46	19	22	5	125	139	43

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	45	32	8	5	151	113	69
San Jose	44	27	11	6	144	114	60
Los Angeles	44	26	13	5	114	91	57
Vancouver	45	23	13	9	121	113	55
Phoenix	42	21	12	9	129	127	51
Calgary	43	15	22	6	100	137	36
Edmonton	46	14	27	5	119	161	33

Note: Two points awarded for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss.

Wednesday's results
Philadelphia 3 Montreal 1
N.Y. Rangers at Chicago
Ottawa at Colorado
Tuesday's results
Anaheim 5 Boston 2
Minnesota 2 Los Angeles 1 (SO)
Nashville 3 San Jose 2
N.Y. Islanders 5 Toronto 3
Philadelphia 3 New Jersey 2 (OT)
Phoenix 6 Calgary 0
Pittsburgh 5 Vancouver 4 (SO)
St. Louis 5 Edmonton 2
Tampa Bay 4 Winnipeg 2
Carolina at Buffalo (ppd., storm)
Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Dallas at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Washington at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at Nashville, 8 p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Boston at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Detroit at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.
Friday's games
Dallas at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Washington, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Columbus, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Edmonton, 10 p.m.
St. Louis at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	24	41	65
Kane, Chi	23	31	54
Tavares, NYI	20	34	54
Getzlaf, Ana	20	29	49
Kunitz, Pgh	23	25	48
Thornton, SJ	5	43	48
Sharp, Chi	25	21	46
Perry, Ana	24	22	46
Backstrom, Wash	10	36	46
Malkin, Pgh	12	33	45
Toews, Chi	15	29	44
Ovechkin, Wash	31	12	43
Okposo, NYI	17	26	43
Marleau, SJ	20	22	42
Keith, Chi	3	39	42
Seguin, Dal	21	20	41

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday's games — All Times Eastern
NFC — New Orleans at Seattle, 4:35 p.m.
AFC — Indianapolis at New England, 8:15 p.m.
Sunday's games
NFC — San Francisco at Carolina, 1:05 p.m.
AFC — San Diego at Denver, 4:40 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	28	7	.800	Ñ
d-Miami	27	8	.771	1
Atlanta	19	17	.528	9½
d-Toronto	17	17	.500	10½
Washington	15	17	.469	11½
Chicago	15	18	.455	12
Charlotte	15	21	.417	13½
Brooklyn	14	21	.400	14
Detroit	14	22	.389	14½
Boston	13	22	.371	15
New York	12	22	.353	15½
Cleveland	12	23	.343	16
Philadelphia	12	23	.343	16
Orlando	10	24	.294	17½
Milwaukee	7	27	.206	20½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	28	8	.778	Ñ
d-Oklahoma City	27	8	.771	½
Portland	26	9	.743	1½
d-L.A. Clippers	24	13	.649	4½
Golden State	24	14	.632	5
Houston	22	13	.629	5½
Phoenix	20	13	.606	6½
Dallas	20	16	.556	8
Denver	17	17	.500	10
Minnesota	17	17	.500	10
New Orleans	15	18	.455	11½
Memphis	15	19	.441	12
L.A. Lakers	14	21	.400	13½
Sacramento	11	22	.333	15½
Utah	12	25	.324	16½

d — division leaders ranked in top four positions.

Wednesday's results
Toronto 112 Detroit 91
Atlanta 97 Indiana 87
Brooklyn 102 Golden State 98
San Antonio 112 Dallas 90
Washington at New Orleans
L.A. Lakers at Houston
Phoenix at Minnesota
Orlando at Portland
Boston at L.A. Clippers
Tuesday's late results
Denver 129 Boston 98
Sacramento 123 Portland 119
San Antonio 110 Memphis 108 (OT)
Utah 112 Oklahoma City 101
Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Miami at New York, 8 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Denver, 10:30 p.m.

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Top Leafs must be better in chase for playoff berth

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Adam Proteau
toronto@metronews.ca

Jonathan Bernier has struggled in the Leafs' two games — both losses — since the Winter Classic on New Year's Day. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Maple Leafs' Jekyll-and-Hyde season has had a lot more hiding of late, with absentee performances both individually, including Jonathan Bernier's sub-par showing Tuesday against the Islanders, and collectively, such as Saturday's 7-1 whipping at the hands of the Rangers.

As has been noted in this column, the Leafs' predicament isn't as dire as the worst of the Chicken-Little brigade would have you believe. No longer is this a team stocked with has-beens on their last legs; there are young, quality assets here and a rising salary cap allows for additional roster flexibility in the summer. That said, with every game that continues the current trend of one step forward and three stumbles back, the futures of virtually everyone in the organization become less certain.

It's tough imagining Leafs management firing coach Randy Carlyle when he still hasn't had a full 82-game season in Toronto. However, many of his decisions have been questionable — his insistence on almost always dressing two enforcers, for example — and dismissing him would in many respects be better than making a panicked trade.

But there's little doubt trades will come with or without a shakeup behind the bench and Leafs GM Dave Nonis has options. Goaltender James Reimer clearly is not the preferred option for Carlyle and could help a number of teams; Dion Phaneuf's recently announced extension includes a limited no-trade clause, but one that doesn't kick in until the start of next season; and the shine on players like Nazem Kadri and Cody Franson has faded of late, meaning they could be moved.

But even then, total roster turnover is a practical impossibility. Those who remain, and you have to presume that includes Phil Kessel, James van Riemsdyk and Morgan Rielly, must figure out things on their own.

That's the real challenge here. Shuffle or no shuffle, the Leafs are only going to be as good as their cornerstone players. Until Toronto's core players find the strength to avoid embarrassments that have become all too common, the mediocrity will continue.

Talent injection

TFC keep turning heads

CATHAL KELLY
Special to Metro

Michael Bradley GETTY IMAGES

Toronto FC is on the verge of a stunning $100-million swoop that will entirely transform the soccer landscape in this city.

They have already secured the services of England and Tottenham Hotspur striker Jermain Defoe. He is scheduled to be unveiled at a press conference on Monday.

That rumour has been around for months as the club worked to convince the player he would thrive here, and to reassure his EPL team that they could afford to let him go.

In a more shocking turn, TFC is also in final negotiations to sign U.S. and Roma midfielder Michael Bradley to join the team. According to a highly placed team source, that deal is in its final stages. If completed on schedule, Bradley would be introduced alongside Defoe on Monday.

In order to make room for Bradley on the roster, TFC would have to trade current designated player, Argentine Matias Laba. That deal would not have to be done for several weeks. There remains hope that he might be loaned out rather than dealt.

Contacted about the deal, MLSE president and CEO Tim Leiweke would offer only a terse, "I'm not going to talk about it." Generally, when Leiweke doesn't want to talk about things, it's because they're happening.

Upon introduction, Defoe will immediately rejoin Spurs in England. He will officially become a TFC player on March 1, two weeks before the start of the season in Seattle.

GO TO METRONEWS.CA FOR MORE OF CATHAL KELLY'S TAKE ON TORONTO FC.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will gain more by doing less today. Cut back on your workload or get friends to help you out. Better still, do both. There's no cosmic law that says you have to do anything at all.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will be inspired to give your best over the next 24 hours. Hold on to that positive, can-do attitude as long as you can — ideally until the moon is full seven days from now.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Today you will know what is right and wrong, and which course of action you should be taking. If you choose not to take it, the consequences may not be to your liking.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If someone whose judgment you trust urges you to really go for it today, you must act immediately. Too often in the past you have been too careful and missed out — now go to the other extreme and throw caution to the wind.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It's a good day romance and if anyone is of the opinion that you lack passion, they will soon see the error of their ways. When a Leo gets fired up, the heat is enough to melt the coldest of hearts.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You are enamored more by things than you are by people at the moment. There's nothing wrong with that but take care that your material desires don't detract from your relationships.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you think all things are possible, you're right. But why make a battle of it when you have the charm to get what you want without a struggle? Or is that what you enjoy?

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Let others know what you are willing to put up with and what will happen if they push their luck too far. There are times to be tactful but this isn't one of them. Be bold and, if necessary, be brutal too.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't stay indoors and hide away. Get out into the world and show everyone what star quality looks like. You were born to be larger than life, so why are you peeking out from behind the curtains?

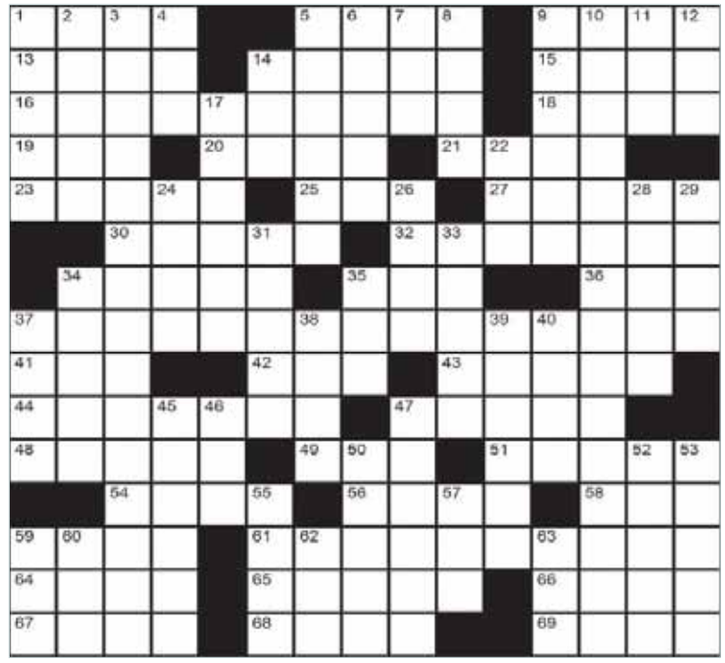
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you've fallen out with someone, it is the time to make up. That applies to all kinds of relationships but mainly to those of a personal nature.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may think you can do as you please at the moment but you are kidding yourself and today's events will bring that fact home to you sharply. There are forces operating behind the scenes that limit your options.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If someone wants to make a nuisance of themselves, let them. Most likely, they are hoping you will overreact. Treat them with the contempt they deserve — ignore them completely. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

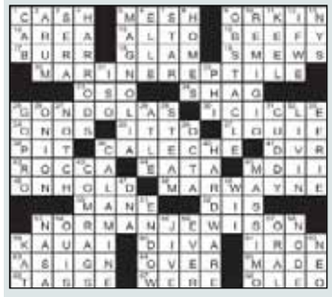
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. ...seis, siete, __...
5. Margaret Mitchell's epic book of '36
9. Rabbit-style tail
13. Scorch
14. Medieval thigh armour, variantly
15. #5-Across home
16. It's currently underway in Russia: 2 wds.
18. AD = __ Domini
19. Oxygen
20. Robert Burns' 'old'
21. Money obligation
23. Mythological tree nymph
25. Type of rally
27. Get cut, do this
30. American poet Sylvia
32. Port __, BC
34. Russian river
35. Orlando's li'l state
36. Implore
37. Cultural attractions in Ottawa: 2 wds.
41. Meal scrap
42. '90s album: 'A Boy Named __'
43. Grocery section
44. Canadian actress Wendy
47. Outrageous interest rate
48. North or South country
49. Practically forever
51. Canadian measurement
54. Soaks flax
56. Bon Jovi's Mr. Torres
58. "Take on Me" band
59. Vancouver-born broadcaster, __-Yin Lee
61. Billboard toppers: 2 wds.
64. Pottery-firing furnace
65. Classic theatre
66. Give out
67. __ _'Orleans, Quebec
68. Get a paycheck
69. Ptolemy's pursuit, puny-ly

Down
1. Group of eight
2. Church singing group
3. It put Daniel Radcliffe on the map: 3 wds.
4. Legendary monster
5. 'G' of Ontario's U of G
6. Actress Olivia
7. Airport screening org.
8. Colin James' "__ You Lie"
9. Horsie's house
10. Chaucer's creation: 2 wds.
11. Vase
12. Philosophical principle
14. French vineyard
17. Attempted: 3 wds.
22. Shrink
24. U2's "__ _ Want Is You"
26. Warm climate tree
28. "__ of the State" (1998)
29. Makes ground holes
31. Sylvester Stallone/Kurt Russell movie, "__ & Cash" (1989)
33. Hails
34. Writer of ancient Rome, Marcus Terentius __
35. "And __, she don't know...": Bit of The Supremes' "Back in My Arms Again"
37. Arrow-to-bow-string groove
38. Five-star
39. Pink-fleshed fish, en francais
40. Emerald land
45. 'Kiss Land': Album by Canadian artist The __
46. Took a chair
47. Early Celine Dion song
50. CC-138 Twin __ (Search and Rescue aircraft of the RCAF)
52. #5-Across' leading man
53. Facilitator
55. Cobbler's fixed thing
57. NFL's Bengals, on scoreboards
59. Do alpine-ing
60. Pantry product
62. Ms. Lupino
63. "Today" rival, commonly

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

2		6	8		3	4		9
		9	2		5	7		
	7						6	
			5		7			
5								8
			3		2			
	9						3	
		3	6		4	8		
8		7	1		9	5		6

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	3	9	1	7	6	5	4	8
1	7	4	5	3	8	6	9	2
5	8	6	4	9	2	1	3	7
8	9	7	6	2	4	3	5	1
4	6	2	3	5	1	8	7	9
3	1	5	9	8	7	2	6	4
7	2	3	8	4	5	9	1	6
6	5	8	7	1	9	4	2	3
9	4	1	2	6	3	7	8	5

Today
-7°/-8°
Sunny

Friday
1°/-1°
Flurries
40%

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